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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CHIEF AUDU I. OGBEH, OFR AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL ROUND-TABLE WORKSHOP TO CONCLUDE THE 2015 NIGERIA COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION (CPE) UNDERTAKEN BY THE IFAD INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF EVALUATION (IOE) HELD AT THE SHERATON HOTEL AND TOWERS, ABUJA**  
**7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2016**

**Protocols**

It is my honour and pleasure to be here at the Inauguration of the National Round-Table Workshop on the Nigeria Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) Workshop organized by the Government of Nigeria and the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) in collaboration with the IFAD's West and Central Africa (WCA) Division. I want to welcome the IFAD and Nigerian stakeholders and express my confidence in the success of this important Workshop.

2. It is remarkable that IFAD has continued to deepen its long standing fruitful and result based partnership with the Federal Government of Nigeria. Just between December 2015 and now, IFAD has had a Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop and another Regional Implementation Forum here in Abuja, Nigeria all aimed at enhancing sustainable improvement in the implementation of country programmes of various member countries.

3. In the long standing history of our collaboration spanning over thirty (30) years IFAD has financed over ten (10) projects for a total amount of USD317.9 million (active and closed portfolio) and with the Nigeria portfolio as one of the most important in Sub-Saharan Africa and globally. In addition, Nigeria continues to contribute significantly to the replenishment of IFAD Resources.

4. Progressively, IFAD programmes/projects in Nigeria have made remarkable impact in developing the agricultural sector, it has facilitated the development of the rural economy where smallholder farmers are predominant and reduction in the poverty level.

5. I am aware that the Nigeria CPE commenced with a preparatory mission to Abuja by the IFAD Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE) in July 2015 and expected to conclude with a National Round-Table Workshop in Nigeria in early 2016 which we are witnessing today.

6. We understand that the National Workshop will discuss the main issues emerging from the Nigeria CPE, provide inputs for the preparation of the evaluation's Agreement at Completion Point (ACP) and discuss the opportunities and challenges of the IFAD/Government of Nigeria partnership taking into account the evolving country context as well as IFAD's priorities in



Nigeria. The Workshop will provide a platform to discuss key issues that will inform the future of IFAD programmes in Nigeria with representatives from Government, IFAD Management and staff, Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations, Directors of IFAD funded projects and programmes, representatives from Academia and Research Institutions, the Private Sector and Foundations, Donors and selected Resource Persons.

7. I believe that the outcome of this one day Workshop will assist to chart a course for Government development priorities in 2016 and beyond.

8. Let me however remind that in the course of doing this, emphasis will be required in Government achievement of additional 20 million MT of food per annum to the domestic food supply over the next four (4) years. The adoption of the market led approach to drive inclusive growth for smallholder farmers, women and youths, promotion of entrepreneurs in value addition activities, strengthening of private-sector led input market in seed and fertilizers and investment in rural infrastructure for improved market access are critical.

9. Nigeria being the world largest producer of cassava will explore the possibility of using cassava leaves for the feeding of cattle; improvement of cattle breeds through massive artificial insemination programmes; elimination of pastoralist/farmer conflicts by the development of large paddocks with improved grasses nationwide, these are special grasses with high percentage of crude protein and addressing the challenges of Climate Change and its effects on agriculture; amongst others.

10. We look forward to having small processing mills installed in our rural communities towards taking life back to the villages and creating a Rural Economy/Livelihood while slowly and steadily reversing the age-old Rural-Urban Migration.

11. In conclusion, we wish to state that we fully appreciate IFAD supports over the years and will continue to leverage on that support with assurance for a greater future.

12. On this note, I wish all stakeholders successful deliberations.

13. Thank you and God bless.